

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 /001 W
-----065490 290110Z /62
O 290034Z OCT 79
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1423

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 20674

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E.O. 12065: RDS 10/27/99 (HOLBROOKE, RICHARD) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM, RP, PEPR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS OCTOBER 25,
- 1979: HUMAN RIGHTS, SUCCESSION, IRAN

1. SECRET ENTIRE TEXT

2. DURING OUR CALL ON PRESIDENT MARCOS OCTOBER 25, MARCOS
ASKED TO SPEAK TO ME PRIVATELY. MOST OF THE CONVERSATION
IS REPEATED IN A SEPARATE EXDIS TELEGRAM, BUT AFTER A
LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF THE THAI-CAMBODIAN SITUATION, MARCOS
AND I BEGAN TALKING ABOUT THE DOMESTIC SITUATION AND HUMAN
RIGHTS.

3. I BEGAN BY RAISING THE REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTER --
AN ACTION RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH I SAID HAD HAD
A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE PHILIPPINE IMAGE IN THE WORLD:
MARCOS IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TALKING ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION. HE BLAMED THE PRESS FOR HIS BAD IMAGE. I
TOLD MARCOS THAT I HAD BREAKFAST IN D.C. WITH RAUL
MANGLAPUS, AND HAD BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY FRAZIER MEADE, THE
PHILIPPINE COUNTRY DIRECTOR. I SAID THAT MARCOS' OPPONENTS
APPEAR TO HAVE HARDENED THEIR POSITIONS AND WERE DUG IN FOR
A MORE MILITANT PHASE. MARCOS DID NOT AGREE, THE MILITANCY
I PERCEIVED WAS ACTUALLY A FRAUD. (MARCOS DID NOT MENTION
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THE LETTER HE HAD GOTTEN FROM MANGLAPUS.) I SAID THAT I
WAS SORRY MANGLAPUS HAD NOT ACCEPTED MARCOS' INVITATION TO
VISIT THE PHILIPPINES. I MENTIONED THAT AFTER OUR MEETING
IN WASHINGTON WITH MANGLAPUS, FRAZIER MEADE, UPON ARRIVING
IN MANILA, HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY A FRIEND OF MANGLAPUS AND
THAT MEADE AND A MEMBER OF THE EMBASSY HAD MET WITH THIS
MAN AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MANGLAPUS GROUP THIS

MORNING. MARCOS DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THIS STATEMENT. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD INFILTRATED COMPLETELY THIS GROUP, THE NPA, MNLF, CARDINAL SIN'S OFFICE, AND ALL OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS. SINCE HE HAD MENTIONED CARDINAL SIN, I SAID THAT I HAD NEVER MET CARDINAL SIN (HE WANS SURPRISED AT THIS) BUT SAID I WOULD SEE HIM THIS TRIP IF HE HAD TIME. MRS. MARCOS, I NOTED, HAD SAID SHE THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA. MARCOS SAID IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ME TO MEET WITH CARDINAL SIN, WHO WAS A STUPID AND UNEDUCATED MAN OF CHINESE EXTRACTION NOW ENAMORED OF HIS GROWING PUBLICITY. MARCOS SAID HE HOPED THE POPE WOULD REIN IN THE CARDINAL'S ADVOCACY OF VIOLENCE. I SAID THAT WHILE I WAS NOT AN EXPERT ON THEOLOGY, IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO RECONCILE CHRISTIAN VALUES WITH USE OF VIOLENCE. MARCOS AGAIN SAID HE WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT HIS OPPONENTS BECAUSE HE HAD EVERYONE INFILTRATED. I TOLD MARCOS THAT MEADE AND I WOULD CONTINUE TO MEET WITH MANGLAPUS FROM TIME-TO-TIME. I SAID THAT I HAD RECENTLY BEEN CONTACTED BY STEVE PSINAKIS A MAN THAT I HAD FIRST MET AT A CHANCE ENCOUNTER AND THEN RECEIVED IN MY OFFICE ONCE. I TOLD MARCOS THAT I WOULD NOT MEET WITH PSINAI AGAIN BECAUSE I FOUND HIS BEHAVIOR AND ACTIVITIES UNATTRACTIVE AND HEADING IN A BAD DIRECTION. MARCOS NOTED THIS WITHOUT COMMENT. I STRESSED THE NEED FOR MORE ACTIONS TO LIBERALIZE THE REGIME, AND NOTED THE BARBERO COMMISSION AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

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4. MARCOS THEN MENTIONED AQUINO. I ASKED MARCOS WHY HE WOULDN'T ALEASE AQUINO. MARCOS BEGAN A LENGTHY EXPLANATION OF PAST MANEUVERS. I INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT AN IMPORTANT FILIPINO COLUMNIST HAD TOLD AN AMERICAN REPORTER LAST WEEK THAT MARCOS WOULD HAVE RELEASED AQUINO IF THE US ONLY HAD STOPPED CALLING FOR SUCH AN ACTION. MARCOS

LAUGHED AND CALLED THIS "JOURNALISTIC NONSENSE." IN FACT, HE SAID, AQUINO HAD LIED ABOUT THEIR NEGOTIATIONS LAST YEAR, JUST WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO BE RELEASED. I SAID I THOUGHT AQUINO WOULD BE LESS DANGEROUS TO MARCOS OUT IN THE OPEN THAN HE WAS IN JAIL, WHERE HE HAD BECOME A SYMBOLIC FOCAL POINT OF OPPOSITION. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, I TOLD MARCOS, AS WE HAD TOLD HIM BEFORE, THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WOULD NOT LIONIZE AQUI IF HE WERE RELEASED. BUT WE COULDN'T CONTROL CONGRESS OR THE PRESS. MARCOS LISTENED BUT MADE NO INDICATION THAT HE WAS READY TO MAKE A DEAL WITH AQUINO. MARCOS SAID, IN AN ALMOST CONSPIRATORIAL MANNER, THAT HE WAS HAVING A SECRET EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITH AQUINO.

5. SUCCESSION: MARCOS THEN MENTIONED THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF FIVE PEOPLE THAT HE SAYS HELPS HIM RUN THE

COUNTRY. HE MENTIONED VIRATA, PATERNO, SICAT AND TWO OTHERS. HE SAID HE WOULD EXPAND OR CHANGE THE MEMBERSHIP FROM TIME-TO-TIME. HE SAID THE COMMITTEE WOULD RUN THE COUNTRY WHEN HE WAS NOT AROUND AND I USED THIS OPENING TO BROACH A DELICATE SUBJECT -- THE SUCCESSION. MARCOS THEN GAVE ME AN ANSWER QUITE SIMILAR TO THE ONE HE HAD GIVEN SENATOR INOUE, ONLY MORE SPECIFIC. HIS FIRST PRIORITY, HE SAID, WAS TO CONDUCT THE LOCAL ELECTIONS NOW SCHEDULED

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FROM HOLBROOKE

FOR EARLY 1981. FOLLOWING THAT, HE WILL BEGIN TO LET MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACT AS PRIME MINISTER FOR SIX MONTH PERIODS WHILE HE REMAINED PRESIDENT SO AS TO GROOM A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS. HE ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT OF THE IDEA. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE PHILIPPINES DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY TO SHOW THAT THERE IS A SUCCESSION SYSTEM- FOR AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION. HE SAID THERE IS ONE, AND OUT-LINED THE PROCEDURES THE IBP WOULD FOLLOW TO ELECT A PRESIDENT IF MARCOS WERE TO LEAVE. HE SAID THAT THIS SYSTEM WAS WELL KNOWN AND SERVED THE PURPOSE I HAD IN MIND. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT IT WAS A VERY GOOD IDEA TO GROOM POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS, AND TO ENCOURAGE HIM IN THAT DIRECTION - I CITED DEGAULLE'S SELECTION AND GROOMING OF POMPIDOU IN THE FIFTH REPUBLIC (I DID NOT REMIND HIM THAT POMPIDOU LATER HELPED EASE DEGAULLE OUT). MARCOS, UNDERSTANDABLY, LIKED THE ANALOGY TO DEGAULLE, INTENDED OR NOT, AND NOTED THAT POMPIDOU HAD BEEN A BANKER. I URGED MARCOS TO CONSIDER APPOINTING A PRIME MINISTER OTHER THAN HIMSELF BEFORE THE ELECTION. MARCOS SAID THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE AND THAT HIS

ENERGIES MUST BE DEVOTED TO THE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE NEXT EIGHTEEN MONTHS. HE THEN MADE A DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE CABINET -- A GROUP OF "BRILLIANT AND DEDICATED MEN".

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SINCE I PRESSED AS FAR AS I FELT POSSIBLE ON THE SUCCESSION ISSUE -- SOMETHING I HAD NEVER RAISED BEFORE WITH HIM -- I LET THE MATTER REST AT THAT POINT.

6. MARCOS THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF IRAN. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHY I THOUGHT THE SHAH HAD FALLEN; HE BELIEVED THAT BILL SULLIVAN HAD PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE. I TOLD HIM THAT BILL SULLIVAN HAD NOT PLAYED A ROLE IN THE FALL OF THE SHAH; THE SHAH HAD FALLEN OF HIS OWN WEIGHT. HE HAD HAD NO POLITICAL BASE; HE WAS OUT OF TOUCH. MARCOS INTERJECTED TO SAY: "YES, THE SHAH HAD NO POLITICAL BASE; HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE." MARCOS SAID THAT THE SHAH'S GREATEST FAILURE WAS HE GOT SCARED AND FAILED TO GIVE THE ARMY THE ORDER TO SHOOT. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT THE SOLDIERS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN WILLING TO FIRE AND AND ANYWAY THAT WAS NOT THE KEY TO THE TRAGEDY OF IRAN. I SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO AVOID CREATING DANGEROUS SYMBOLIC LEADERS LIKE KHOMEINI. MURPHY

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